



## **Stakeholder Day**

7<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Royal Horticultural Halls Conference Centre, London

### **Introduction**

On March 7<sup>th</sup> 2011, two days before the launch of the Green Paper 'Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability', the Dyslexia-SpLD Trust (DST) held an information and training day for Stakeholders, in central London. The aim of the day was:

- to disseminate information and best practice to the sector
- gather information to feed back to government
- add value to the work of the DST
- safeguard the weight and success of future DST work

Over 60 people attended the day from a broad cross section, including representation from;

- Schools
- Local authorities
- Universities
- Charities
- Trusts
- Practitioners

### **What we did**

Sir Jim Rose chaired the day with keynotes from Brian Lamb OBE and Dr John Rack. The morning provided opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions and to learn about and comment on current DST work. The afternoon was organised to gather the views of the sector by promoting meaningful discussion through facilitated workshops.

The following is a summary of our stakeholders' feedback.

## How can parents/ key workers easily access reliable information on the range of support available to address their children's special needs?

### The following was viewed as being essential:

- The existence of clear policy, applicable to all Local Authorities, on addressing SpLD linked to mainstream curriculum
- Policy should include identification and step-by-step intervention; this should be standard and transparent
- The existence of a key worker to liaise between parents and schools, supporting all but particularly those parents who may find it hard to communicate with schools
- SEN training, including SpLD, to be included in all initial teacher training
- School SEN budget be made available to Governor for SEN; information available to parents including on-line
- Time; for teachers to have dialogue with parents, to access sources of information
- Published pathways – clarity of offer and expectations and triggers for action

### The following was viewed as being good practice:

- Parental involvement – encourage parents to support their children, for example through providing books and educational games to be read/ played with at home

### The following was viewed as being aspirational:

- Clear links to speech and language staff, occupational therapists and health providers to identify and support co-occurring difficulties
- Information to be made available to parents on school workforce training and SEN expertise of staff

## How do we ensure more transparency about funding and choice within the system for parents/ key workers?

### The following was viewed as being essential:

- Accountability of SEN budgets including ring fencing, value for money and financial reporting
- Strong leadership and management including continual professional development in SEN
- SEN policy clearly identifying procedure
- 'Citizens Advice' - Trusted cadre of professionals who can give informed info and advice to parents and key workers
- For many parents communication is an issue, they rely on schools for information. LA should ensure schools have information to hand to parents/ carers

**The following was viewed as being good practice:**

- Awareness raising for parents on available services including costs and home support strategies to promote parental involvement and empowerment
- The importance of the SENCO role, as part of the leadership and management team, in monitoring and evaluation whole school SEN
- Good communication – time to talk – role of SENCO. Inclusive information available to all in a variety of formats
- Collaborative involvement of parents, school workforce and local authorities in determining use of SEN budget

**The following was viewed as being aspirational:**

- Involvement of children and young people in choice of intervention
- a national helpline where parents could get information on SEN according to their individual circumstances
- community based information sharing sessions with the support of educational psychologists and parent partnership
- The existence of a SEN parent budget

**How are the needs of our pupils being met under the current funding regime?**

**The following was viewed as being essential:**

- Clarity on resources – cut waste, know your budget and best use of funding
- Early action – ongoing, monitored, sustained interventions
- There needs to be education/training for parents with the aligning importance attached to this
- The senior management and/or governors of a school should be steered by a robust school development plan including a dyslexia/SpLD policy
- There needs to be dyslexia/SpLD expertise available and accessible to all schools and ultimately children and young people. The “dyslexia friendly framework” is a good starting point.

**The following was viewed as being good practice:**

- More in-school specialist intervention
- more CPD in SEN for school workforce
- whole class phonics based literacy
- higher presence of assistive technologies
- dyslexia friendly schools

**The following was viewed as being aspirational:**

- SEN CPD to be mandatory across the schools' workforce

## How do we as stakeholders work together, to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SpLD/ Dyslexia?

### The following was viewed as being essential:

- Wider engagement with parents by providing jargon free information, community based workshops on home support and support groups
- Intelligent involvement of children & young people in the development of the Education, Health and Care Plan
- Providing information in different languages, including the use of interpreters as necessary
- Encourage the view that support is not just the responsibility of the teacher but a partnership between school, parents and community
- Provide a consensus view to communicate with government
- Ensure all interventions are evidence based
- There is a need for parent engagement in an accessible way (not in writing and jargon free). A parent advocate would be helpful to be the coordinator or mediator between school and additional support/information
- Parents need to be offered informal meetings on their territory (community centres, libraries, Surestart centres including social media networks etc.)
- There is a need to pool expertise between multi-agencies to celebrate learners' achievements. COLLABORATION

### The following was viewed as being good practice:

- Providing the mechanism for holding regular forums for idea sharing
- Provide the opportunity and platform for parental involvement in the review of SEN policy

### The following was viewed as being aspirational:

- Multidisciplinary collaboration providing an holistic approach to intervention

## Summary of top priorities

Amongst the answers there were overlapping themes and responses, demonstrating a clear concern, requirement or recommendation for improvement. These are listed below:

- 1) Clear standardised policy/ procedure map for identifying and supporting individuals with Dyslexia/ SpLD. Therefore providing guidance to practitioners and ensuring resources and methods are applied consistently across all schools and local authorities.
- 2) SEN Training across all staffing – potentially as part of basic training. Ensuring greater recognition of issues, identification and support and consistent approach across schools and individual classes.
- 3) Amount of SEN budget and use of SEN budget to be published by schools/ appear in annual reports. Greater accountability for the use of SEN budgets to ensure value for money and best application of funding. Also serves to inform parents and raise awareness.
- 4) Parents need to be engaged more in the process. Need to develop ‘parent advocates’ to support communication between schools/ Local Authorities and parents. The experience can be intimidating for some parents but they need to be encouraged to participate and should feel involved.

## Future plans

As part of The DST workplan for 2011-13, there will be further opportunities for stakeholders to contribute, potentially via information and training days and/ or on-line consultation. All details will be available on the Trust website.

[www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk](http://www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk)

Comments from the stakeholder day will be reviewed by The Trust Directors and Steering Group and may influence project shaping. The 2011-13 workplan currently includes:

- Projects working with parents and schools to improve awareness, access and confidence
- Projects to improve training analysis and access for professionals
- Working across the sector and with government to provide information and to represent the sector.